



**NEW BRITAIN FIRE DEPARTMENT  
FIRE CHIEF'S OFFICE**

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*"making New Britain safer"*

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Public Health Committee  
Testimony RE: HB 5542  
March 19, 2014

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony regarding HB 5542.

My name is Thomas Ronalter. I am the Fire Chief for the City of New Britain and recently served on the CT EMS PSA Task Force.

Please take note that the EMS PSA Task Force made 5 recommendations in its final report. Unfortunately, HB 5542 includes only Task Force Recommendations #1-4. Recommendations #1 through 4 in the EMS PSA Task Force Final Report are important steps to improving the delivery of EMS services to the citizens of Connecticut. These recommendations have the unanimous support of the entire Task Force and the agencies they represent.

Most importantly, recommendation #5 is the Alternative Provision of PSA Responsibilities. This recommendation states that municipalities shall have the right to submit a Local EMS Plan for consideration to DPH for the alternative provision of PSA responder responsibilities. Recommendation #5 does not offer any guarantees of a change of EMS provider. Rather, it simply offers a municipality, which believes that their community can better served by a different EMS provider, the opportunity to have their specific case heard by DPH.

Recommendation #5 was a compromise by those supporting municipal rights. Some Task Force members, including myself, supported a more automatic return of PSAs to the local government. However, we were willing to and did compromise. We moved a great distance from our original position. The proposed language allows a proposal to be presented to the DPH Commissioner for approval. That is a fairly high bar. However, those Task Force members desiring to maintain the status quo for PSAs did not move their position one bit and did not compromise at all. So, some may argue that the Task Force failed by not reaching consensus on Recommendation #5. However, how is consensus to be reached when not all parties are interested in reaching consensus?

Municipalities must provide public safety services to their citizens. However, in the case of EMS services, local government has no control of the provision of its EMS provider. Primary Service Area Responders have enjoyed almost 4 decades of having the exclusive right to PSAs within the State of Connecticut. No other municipal services are granted this arrangement. It is time for a rational and reasonable change.

In closing I ask your support of Recommendations #1-4 and urge you to add Recommendation #5 to HB 5542. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

Respectfully Submitted,

Thomas G. Ronalter  
Fire Chief and  
Emergency Management Director